Good for Kennecott

The news is good for a change. Kennecott's \$1.5 billion modernization is bound to pay off not only in higher profits for the company but also in better jobs for workers, a boost to the local economy and a cleaner environment for Salt Lake Valley. Hearty congratulations are due.

The copper giant, which produces about 325,000 tons of copper a year, accounting for more than half the value of metal extraction in Utah, is experiencing a phenomenal turnaround.

Hefty investments in new facilities and equipment are slashing production costs and air emissions, positioning the company to capitalize in a big way on renewed demands for its product.

RTZ Corp., Kennecott's Londonbased owner, reports spending \$880 million for the new smelter and refinery and \$620 million for a modern concentrator. The state-of-the-art plant is expected to cut smelting costs 53 percent and refining costs 45 percent, making Kennecott the lowest-cost copper producer in the world.

The company has devoted as much as \$154 million to environmental cleanup, which helps mitigate water contamination and control tailings dust, and soon will eliminate 99.9 percent of sulfur-oxide air emissions. This year, \$1.5 million will finance landscaping for the tailings pile and eroded land east of Bingham Canyon.

Modernization put some 3,300 construction people to work the past few years and provided jobs for 2,300 copper workers who otherwise faced an uncertain future.

But the company's progress has not been painless. Thousands of former Kennecott employees were forced to retire early or change jobs, often settling for a lower standard of living. Workers rehired in 1987 made wage concessions, and hundreds again will lose jobs as the company trims its workforce.

Questions also linger about Kennecott's longterm impact on the environment. Magna officials, for example, feel good about the company's recent cleanup efforts but wonder what will happen when it shuts down in 25 years or so. Who will care for the thousands of acres of tailings, reclaim scarred lands and clean ground water when Kennecott's gone?

The more profitable and environmentally responsible Kennecott is until then, the more secure Kennecott workers will be, and the easier the environmental questions will be to answer. The company's recent performance, with modernization at its core, should give Utahns confidence that Kennecott will succeed as a good corporate citizen.

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ANOTHER VIEW

From The Philadelphia Inquirer

Bob Dole Can Be Better

Now comes the Senate majority leader, Bob Dole, that most familiar of all Republicans, announcing his third run for the White House, even as his old party by many measures — is becoming a

A magazine profile last month noted: "He's not a visionary. He's not an outsider. He's not even angry," finding him, finally, an "Uncle Bob" among the firebreathers.

If he overpromises - as George "No New Taxes" Bush did in 1988 — he may well win the nomination, but find himself in an untenable presidency. If he steers a course moderate in social and economic matters, the well-oiled Gramm juggernaut might leave him, once again, sputtering in New Hampshire.

His first taps are not sounding entirely sure-footed, or encouraging. He signed the very sort of "no-new-taxes" pledge that he - rightly - has found gimmicky in the past. He has grafted on old lines from the Dan Quayle playbook, bashing as "indecent" a Hollywood that never seemed to gall him before, calling for cuts in federal arts funding and beating that deadest of dead horses, former Surgeon General Joycelyn Elders.

Frankly, Bob Dole can be better and bigger than that, steadier, wiser, deeper, respectful of government's mission to help those truly in need.

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